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ABSTRACT

A discussion of recent developments, trends, and issues in the study of foreign language learning and teaching is presented, focusing largely on the former Federal Republic of Germany and the Netherlands. First, the situation of foreign language teaching in Europe in general is described, as stated in a declaration of intent of the ministers of education of the European Community. It is noted that while in many countries, more than one foreign language is required of students, language enrollment is still declining. Related developments in the field of applied linguistics are then examined, particularly in research on foreign language teaching. Data on the volume of research activity in European countries since 1966 are offered. Some attention is given to the issue of declaring foreign language teaching a discipline in its own right. Finally, important research priorities are outlined. A 23-item bibliography is included. (MSE)

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EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENTS IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS

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Introduction

In this paper I will discuss recent developments in applied linguistics, but I will restrict myself to that part of the field that is covered in the book that I, with a team of collaborators, brought out towards the end of 1984, entitled *Applied Linguistics and the Learning and Teaching of Foreign Languages* (Van Els, Bongaerts, Extra, Van Os and Janssen-van Dielen, 1984). My topic, therefore, is developments, trends and issues in the study of foreign language learning and teaching. My aim is not to treat all the developments, trends and issues, but just a number of them, that is to say, the ones that I think I am most capable of dealing with and that may, at the same time, be of some interest to a British audience. The title of this paper speaks of 'European' developments in the field of applied linguistics. When the title was suggested to me by Walter Grauberg as planner of the programme, I accepted it, remembering his reassuring remark that I would not be expected to know everything about every country. Had I then known how few European countries I would actually find the opportunity to bring up for treatment here, I might have been more reluctant to accept the suggested title. Two countries in particular will figure regularly in my treatment, viz. the Federal Republic of Germany and The Netherlands.

Finally, in conformity with the other review papers in this volume, I will not only deal with 'current issues and preoccupations' and how they evolved from the past, but I will also attempt to indicate 'what may be forthcoming developments'.

Historical developments and current issues

David Stern, in his monumental book entitled *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching*, has underscored the importance of 'historical awareness as a step' to developing a foreign language teaching theory (see Stern, 1983:75 ff.). He has also pointed out, however, that so far "studies of special aspects have not been carried out in sufficient number, scope, and depth to allow the piecing together of a fully satisfactory general history of language teaching and learning" (*op.cit.* ital:77). As Konrad Schroder, from Augsburg University in the Federal Republic, wrote in 1975, historical descriptions are very often reduced to very broad abstractions, which fact of necessity leads to a distortion of historical reality (see Schroder, 1975:xix). To cite Stern (*op.cit.*) ital more: "Suspensions regarding the soundness of some historical common introductions are aroused by the extraordinary similarity between them. The same historical char-

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acters occur; the same quotations are cited". This, then, is the first important caveat that you have to keep in mind when I make general statements on trends and developments.

The second caveat concerns the degree to which major developments that one discerns over a period of time, especially when the period is such a short one as the one that we are dealing with, are actually very special. To quote once more two frequently cited statements from one of the rare full treatments of the history of foreign language teaching, Kelly's *25 Centuries of Language Teaching*: "modern experts have spent their time in discovering what other men have forgotten", and: "much that is being claimed as revolutionary in this century is merely a rethinking and renaming of early ideas and procedures" (Kelly, 1969ix). The more one goes back to primary historical sources, the more one realizes how apt Kelly's observations are. Such primary sources may be historical course-books, as in Schroder's study of manuals for the study of English as a foreign language in German speaking countries, or treatises of foreign language teaching theory, as for example Seidelmann's monograph first published in 1725, recently re-issued with an extensive introduction by Frank Zapp and Konrad Schroder (see Zapp and Schroder, 1984). There are numerous examples to be found in Seidelmann's treatise of well-balanced opinions and pieces of advice based on teaching experience that sound very new and modern. A similar surprise find - and there must be more such works waiting to be discovered in our libraries - is a Dutch monograph published in 1829. In English, its title would be something like: 'A New Way of Teaching Foreign Languages, in a natural and Mechanical Way'. The author, who claims that he is propagating a new approach developed in Paris, advocates the utilization of slot-filling techniques, i.e. pattern practice, in order to make pupils acquire foreign language competence 'in accordance with the course of nature' (Roggen, 1829:32).

A third important caveat evolves from another observation that stems from David Stern. Let me quote him again: "An historical survey should (but rarely does) distinguish between the history of *ideas* on language-teaching and the development of *practice*, because evidence from polemical or theoretical writings cannot be treated as the same as evidence from language teaching manuals" (Stern, 1983:77). Evidence for the appropriateness of Stern's distinction we found in an investigation that we conducted recently into the actual practice of teaching English, French and German in the upper forms of Dutch secondary schools (see Van Els and Buis, 1987). We recorded current practice and also the developments that class-room teaching had under gone in the past five to ten years. We found that both as to content and as to teaching approach there is a definite tendency towards a newer, more modern practice. But, changes have certainly been much less dramatic in practice than one would have expected from an examination of the relevant debate among theoreticians. We found that

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in schools - at least in Dutch schools - traces of the traditional grammar-translation method are still very much in evidence.

Let me now try to outline the developments that I think may be observed in the field of applied linguistics that I am dealing with here, i.e. the study of the learning and teaching of foreign languages. Before doing so it may be proper to devote some attention to the situation of the practice of foreign language teaching as such in Europe.

The Teaching of Foreign Languages in a Number of European Countries

A suitable point of comparison for a description of the foreign language teaching situation in European countries is provided by a fairly recent declaration of intent issued by the Ministers of Education of the European Community, June 1984. In the declaration all member - states commit themselves to taking all the necessary measures to ensure that as many pupils as possible, before the end of compulsory education, acquire what is called 'practical competence' in at least two foreign languages, one at least being the national language of one of the other member-states (see for a discussion of the declaration, Jacoby, 1985). On two points, actually, a comparison is made possible by this declaration. First, there is the question whether, how many and which foreign languages are to be taught. Second, there is the question what competence is pursued and achieved in the languages that are being taught.

Restricting ourselves to foreign language teaching (FLT) in compulsory education, as does the declaration of the European Ministers, with regard to the first question we may conclude that, very generally speaking, the learning of one foreign language is obligatory, in one way or another, in all countries of the European Community, except in England and Wales. The Netherlands is the only country with an obligatory language in primary education, viz. English. In many countries where there is an obligatory foreign language for everyone, the choice of the language in question is free. In actual practice the majority of pupils in most countries learn one particular language: English in France and West-Germany for example, and French in England and Wales. My impression is that there is no country - except, possibly, Luxemburg - in which *all* pupils learn two foreign languages in compulsory education. Of course, in almost all countries of the European Community there are groups of pupils who do learn two or more foreign languages, by choice or otherwise. The Netherlands is a case in point. Over 65% of all pupils, i.e. those who attend general secondary education, have three compulsory foreign languages in the first phase of secondary education, viz. English, French and German. The other 30% to 35% of the population, however, i.e. those attending the 'vocation-oriented' type of secondary education, may choose not to study any other foreign language besides obligatory English.

Summing up our findings with respect to how many foreign languages are

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being taught in compulsory education to how many pupils, we would have to conclude that so far it has been a matter of decreasing numbers rather than of increasing numbers, notwithstanding the 1984 declaration of intent of the European Community or similar declarations of the EC or other international bodies. The overall situation may not be quite as bleak as it is in the United States, but some of the qualifications that Americans use to describe their own country's position would not fall wide of the mark, when applied to some of the European countries. I am thinking of such qualifications as one finds in the title and in the section headings of Lurie's (1982) article: "America ... Globally Blind, Deaf and Dumb", "America's Scandalous Incompetence in Foreign Languages" and "Provincialism" and "Dangerously Inadequate Understanding of World Affairs".

Turning now to the second point of comparison, i.e. the kind of foreign language competence taught and the levels actually achieved by pupils, there is very little we can say with any degree of certainty. So much, however, does seem certain: there has been a gradual change to teaching actual competence in the language rather than knowledge about the language, and to teaching oral competence rather than written competence. But we just do not know what levels of competence are achieved and whether they in any way come near to what the European Ministers had in mind when they said they would aim for 'practical competence'. As I have pointed out elsewhere (see Van Els, forthcoming), we have no reason to be optimistic on this score. For example, the information that at least 90% of all pupils in England and Wales learn French in secondary schools, sounds promising; but when, subsequently, one sees figures which reveal that about three quarters of the pupils drop French after two or three years, one can hardly imagine that the net-result from a point of view of 'practical competence' can amount to much. Another point that also causes me to be somewhat pessimistic is the following. My own country is well-known for its wealth of FLT, and the Dutch are much praised, internationally, for their competence in foreign languages. This makes me very suspicious, suspicious mainly of what the achievements are of FLT in most of the other European countries. For I only know too well how much the achievements of our FLT still leave to be desired. The 'practical competence' in English of many Dutch people, especially of those who have only attended the lower types of secondary education, is often minimal, even after four years of English. The 'practical competence' in French of many Dutch academics and of people in similar professions, has been shown, in a large foreign language needs research project conducted in the 70s, to be totally insufficient for the purposes for which it is needed, despite the fact that the majority have had six years of French at school, three hours per week on average.

So much for the situation of FLT in Europe at the moment. The information

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given, demonstrates - very roughly, I admit - that, if ever FLT was in need of assistance from applied linguistics, that need has not diminished in the past two decades. The information given should also serve as a background to my treatment later on of might - or, rather, should be - forthcoming developments.

Developments in the Field of Applied Linguistics

Before embarking on a discussion of forthcoming developments, however, let us first have a look retrospectively at what developments the field of applied linguistics has gone through so far. In this, as well I will confine my attention only to developments in the sub-field of applied linguistics that deals with foreign language learning and teaching, but let me just mention in passing two points in connection with the whole field. One is that over the years applied linguistics has focussed more and more on a restricted number of sub-fields, by far most attention being given to the learning and teaching of languages, i.e. first, second and foreign languages. This development may be inferred from the programmes of consecutive ALLA World Congresses, but also from consecutive issues of such journals as the Belgian *ITL Review of Applied Linguistics* and the French *Etudes de Linguistique Appliquée*. The other point is the fairly recent boom in the attention applied linguists devote to applications of information science and (micro) computers and the subsequent revived interest in automatic translation. Ample evidence of this development is to be gleaned from congress reports, as for example of the 1984 annual meeting of the German Association of Applied Linguistics (see Kuhlwein, 1986). In this connection we would like to add in passing that in our investigation of foreign language teaching practice in the upper forms of Dutch secondary education we found a very positive attitude among teachers towards the introduction of microcomputers as learning and teaching aids, which we thought was somewhat surprising in view of the very disappointing experiences of teachers in secondary schools, in my country, with the language laboratory in the recent past (see Van Els and Buis, 1987:76).

Developments in the Field of Foreign Language Teaching Research

At the beginning of the period that I am surveying, Walter Grauberg undertook a study of the role and structure of university language centres in Europe, commissioned by the Council of Europe (see Grauberg, 1971). What he found in 1971, was a great variety of centres, most of them owing their emergence to attempts in the 1960's at reforming university language teaching. Grauberg categorizes the thirty centres or so that he visited into five different groups:

- comprehensive centres, responsible for all the language teaching in their university;
- centres mainly devoted to the teaching of non-linguists;

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- multi-purpose centres, former language laboratory units that had developed also their own teaching and research function;
- centres oriented towards research and the teaching of applied linguistics;
- centres oriented towards the training of teachers.

One of Grauberg's concluding remarks is: "Vigorous research activity is essential to gain recognition in an academic environment where language teaching is still not always considered an academic discipline. Centres devoted to the teaching of methodology and to research seem best placed for growth" (*op.cit.*:61). Of the exclusively research-oriented type, only five were identified by Grauberg. The largest single group was constituted by the multi-purpose centres, which did, therefore, all have a research function of their own, but which all of them also were small in size. The situation, we may conclude, for research into foreign language teaching was still very insecure in the early 1970s. How have things developed in the meantime?

I will not attempt an overall survey of the present state of affairs of the university language centres in all the countries on which Grauberg provides information. If in other countries things have developed along the same lines as in The Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany, the picture at the moment is not really very positive. In my country two of the multi-purpose centres, the Institutes of Applied Linguistics in the Free University of Amsterdam and my own Institute in Nijmegen, have grown and they have definitely established themselves as research centres and as departments of applied linguistics, with a full professorship each and providing courses in applied linguistics. In Leiden and the University of Amsterdam the multi-purpose centres have lost ground, and the centre in Groningen still seems to be struggling. The one centre that in 1970 was fully oriented towards research and the teaching of applied linguistics, the Institute of Applied Linguistics of the University of Utrecht, - quite contrary to what Grauberg foresaw in 1971 - has had a very negative history, i.e. it has disappeared. All in all, positive and negative developments taken together, the situation is not quite bad, but not as good as one would have hoped or expected. The same conclusion seems to apply to the situation in the Federal Republic, where two centres have definitely established themselves fully as research institutes and departments of applied linguistics, viz. the Universities of Bochum and Hamburg. From a German survey of 1983 one gathers that other centres have failed to improve their research capacity in the field of applied linguistics (see Koordinierungsgremium, 1983:64 ff.).

However, the actual volume of research executed has clearly increased over the years, particularly in the Federal Republic, as we shall see presently. Not all research in the field, of course, is the responsibility of language centres or In-

stitutes of Applied Linguistics. It has been said before (see Van Els et al., 1984:140 ff.) that one of the characteristic features of the development of our field is that, after centuries in which there was continual change without any actual progress - Mackey's (1965:138) 'swings of the pendulum of fashion', - we now find ourselves in an era in which the problem of foreign language teaching can be tackled in a scientific way. To arrive at this 'age of enquiry' in the eighties we have had to pass through an 'age of awareness' first, according to Wilkins (1981). Would it be too far-fetched to suggest that the astonishing way in which again and again the ideas of great minds, as for instance Seidelmann's whom we mentioned above, have been forgotten in the history of foreign language teaching, has to be blamed on the fact that these ideas - however sound and well-reasoned in themselves - when put forward, lacked all proper empirical underpinning? (See Van Els and Radstake, 1987:14).

One sign of the increased importance of foreign language teaching research is, no doubt, the interest that at least some national research funding organisations have begun to take in the field. In the federal Republic the 'German Research Council' has funded a special programme in what was called the field of 'Sprachlehrforschung', which ran from 1973 to 1981. Over 20 projects were funded in that period, and - to give some idea of the moneys involved - funding amounted to about 3 million German marks between 1977 and 1981. A full report of the programme and of the individual research projects is given in *Koordinierungsgremium* (1983). In The Netherlands, about 10 years ago, the Organization for the Advancement of Pure Research acknowledged Applied Linguistics as a separate discipline by creating for it, within the Organization, a special working group for Applied Linguistics, through which it annually funds on average six to seven research projects, usually involving one full-time researcher each. There are also other external, and internal, funds available to finance university research projects, but it would lead too far astray to go into any further detail.

Let us, finally, look at another measure of the volume of research activity, viz. at numbers of publications dealing with actual research. The number of publications is, no doubt, whichever way one looks at it, an indication of the state of affairs in a field of study. One knows, of course, that all kinds of objections can be raised against such counts. I am not going to deal with these problems and, although I am well aware that even more objections can be raised against the very tentative and provisional count that I have made, I still think that the count that I am presenting in table 1 is certainly indicative of a number of things.

Let me briefly explain how I arrived at the figures. In my institute we have a fairly representative collection of books and journals in the field of applied linguistics. All the important international journals are represented and there are about 5000 volumes: handbooks, monographs, proceedings and readers, not in-

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cluding foreign language teaching materials, of course. All journals, from their first issues, all the books acquired since about 1976 and some of the books from before 1976, have been systematically catalogued in a fully computerized bibliographical system. I have had separate lists printed, for four consecutive periods of 5 or 6 years, of all books and articles to which the key-word 'foreign language teaching' and also either the key-word 'empirical research' or the key-word 'research report' has been attributed. The total number of items I found was 218.

Table 1: Number of publications dealing with FLT research.

	1966-71	1972-76	1977-81	1982-8	TOTAL
Belgium	-	-	-	4	4
FRG	4	9	19	47	79
France	1	-	2	6	9
Great-Britain	1	4	3	5	13
Netherlands	-	3	7	15	25
Scandinavia	3	8	2	6	19
Other W&E Eur. countries	-	2	3	4	9
USA/Canada	6	11	7	31	55
Other countries	-	-	2	3	5
TOTAL	15	37	45	121	218

In table 1 these publications have been categorized according to the country in which the research was carried out. What one sees is first of all a continuous increase in publications dealing with FLT research over the past twenty years. The increase is particularly striking for the fourth period. The share that individual countries take in the total output, varies a great deal. Particularly low is the share of both France and Great Britain. Whereas there is an overall increase in the output for all countries over the period, Scandinavia is an exception to this rule: the figure here for 1972/76 reflects the activities in connection with the well-known GUME-project (see Von Elek and Oskarsson, 1975). The final point that I would like to draw your attention to is the fact that the Federal Republic has produced a great number of more 'general' works, i.e. German works discussing research planning, design, or policy, most of them in the last few years. I will briefly return to this presently.

In order to get at least some idea of the validity of the figures in table 1, I carried out a second search in our computerized bibliographical system. In this second search I selected all those documents that had been assigned either 'em-

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pirical research' or 'research report', as I had done in the first, but instead of just adding 'foreign language teaching' as a selection term, I added 'foreign language teaching or foreign language learning or second language teaching or second language learning'. Thus, a total of 892 publications were selected. They were categorized according to country and time period in the same way, with the results shown in table 2.

Table 2: Number of publications dealing with research on FL/L2 learning and teaching.

	1966-71	1972-76	1977-81	1982-87	TOTAL
Belgium	-	2	3	11	16
FRG	13	44	85	94	236
France	3	4	3	14	24
Great-Britain	11	8	11	19	49
Netherlands	2	17	48	78	145
Scandinavia	4	8	10	15	37
Other W&E Eur. countries	6	10	11	19	46
USA/Canada	33	60	96	122	311
Other countries	1	2	11	14	28
TOTAL	73	155	278	386	892

As you can see, the overall tendencies in table 2 are comparable to those in table 1: a general increase over the years, and a relatively minor contribution from France and Great Britain. It is also noteworthy that the share from the USA and Canada has risen remarkably (from 25% in table 1 to 35% in table 2), mainly as a result of the wealth of Canadian publications on L2 learning and teaching.

Let me just add one final comment concerning these figures. What they irrefutably show is that there has been an increase of empirical research in the period that we are discussing. That in itself is very gratifying. What the figures do not show, however, is how our field compares in this respect to other fields of research. Whether, therefore, the rate of growth of applied linguistic research is satisfactory in comparison with that of other fields, or (for that matter) in proportion to the need for research in the field of foreign language teaching, we do not know at all.

Applied Linguistics: A Discipline in Its Own Right?

I promised that I would return to the extraordinarily high proportion of 'general' publications in the German Federal Republic, appearing especially in the last

few years. Germans have a reputation, at least in my country, that is borne out by these figures: they tend to indulge in rather philosophical discussions concerning the foundations of science, and questions of research design and methodology. However, there is more to it than that. Part of the 'general' items originating from Germany are concerned with the status of the study of foreign language teaching itself, as a discipline in its own right. A hot debate has been raging in the last few years between the defenders of an independent position for the discipline, called 'Sprachlehrforschung' on the one hand, and a group of Second Language Researchers, so-called 'Zweitspracherwerbsforscher', on the other. The first group centres round the two university research centres of Bochum and Hamburg that we have mentioned before, and their chief spokesman is Professor Bausch; the two chief 'Zweitspracherwerbsforscher' are Professors Wode and Felix. I refer those interested in this discussion, to the report of the Koordinierungsgremium (1983) referred to above. There are also ten papers read at a two-day symposium specifically devoted to the discussion, edited by Bausch and Konigs (1986); and there are a number of articles in *Die neueren Sprachen*, 1985, see Bausch and Konigs (1985), Felix and Hahn (1985), and Wode (1985). When one examines these and other contributions to the discussion, one is at first a bit surprised not only at the fierceness with which some participants attack their opponents, but especially at the fact that in circles of applied linguists the question of identity should still be an arguable point. What is surprising, moreover, is that on closer scrutiny one discovers that even the 'Zweitspracherwerbsforscher' do not really deny 'Sprachlehrforschung' its own place. As far as I have been able to make out, none of the contestants would disagree with what we said (in Van Els et al., 1984:139), when summing up our discussion of the issue: 'Applied linguistics, the study of the teaching and learning of foreign languages, is an autonomous discipline. It is an interdisciplinary subject which takes its research questions from FLT itself and which in trying to answer them turns to the source disciplines in which it looks for hypotheses about possible solutions, which are then tested empirically'. Bausch and his colleagues would never really want to disregard the findings of second language acquisition research, nor would Felix and Wode claim they have all the answers as 'Zweitspracherwerbsforscher' to solve the problems in foreign language teaching. The point at issue between the two groups, I think, is a different one. It is more practical and less philosophical than the contestants would make us believe. Bausch and colleagues seem to be of the opinion that foreign language teaching is not getting enough research attention, and accuse (with or without good reason) others of prowling on their territory.

Important Research Priorities

This, then, brings me to the final section of this paper, in which I will discuss

briefly some developments that I would like to see in the future. First of all, the interpretation that I suggested for Bausch's exasperation at the alleged claims of Felix and Wode was that according to him foreign language teaching research is just not getting enough attention. That is an opinion that I share and I expect that many of you may be of the same opinion. But there is something else the matter with the research in our field, and it may well be that there lies another explanation for Bausch's worries. I think that there is not enough research that concerns questions that originate primarily in foreign language teaching as such. If applied linguistics is basically a 'problem oriented discipline', as Elisabeth Ingram phrased it (see Ingram, no date) developments in the field have not been such that the problems raised by foreign language teaching itself have always, or even most of the time, been the main source of research activities. The infrastructure of applied linguistics, as represented in university language centres, has not been strong enough so far to do full justice to the research needs of the problem area. And that may well be the main reason why, regularly, the danger is very imminent that foreign language teaching will again be turned into the child of fashion of any new development in any of the source disciplines, most of all linguistics, of course. That danger may well be what (somewhat emphatically and frantically) Bausch and colleagues are trying to ward off.

The other related point that has been lacking so far is some kind of direction or coherence to the research activities in our field. Most of it happens in a haphazard way. You will, no doubt, recognize this all around you as well. I personally do not know of any research plan or programme that is built up round the two questions that are fundamental to foreign language teaching, (as they are to all teaching as a matter of fact): **what** is to be taught, and **how** is one to teach? Not even the research programme of the 'German Research Council', to which we referred above, had that kind of coherence.

The two major developments, therefore, that I would like to see come about in the future are: more foreign language teaching research of an empirical kind in which the needs of the field are the prime consideration, and secondly greater coherence and well-thought-out planning of such research. It would lead too far to elaborate further upon these two desiderata. I might have expanded also on a third development that I think deserves serious consideration at the moment. That third issue is whether it would not be a good idea to set up in Europe, some kind of counterpart to the recently founded 'National Foreign Language Centre' in the United States. I myself think that there is a need for a truly independent research centre with a long-term research agenda of its own, geared to the actual needs of the field of foreign language teaching.

Conclusion

Let me conclude with a historical anecdote that may contain a lesson or two for

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today. Its analogy with what is going on in Great Britain in the field of applied linguistics is striking enough, especially in comparison with what is going on in the Federal Republic of Germany. At any rate, the anecdote is amusing, as it stands.

When, on January 14, 1886, Henry Sweet (1845-1912) at the age of 40, wrote the Preface to a major publication of his *The Oldest English Texts*, he was not in a very happy mood. Eight years before, in 1878, he had started work on the project, which he had been planning for many years. Having finished the project at last, he had to admit that he would not be surprised if his critics found more errors in the texts than they should. But Sweet writes: "all I can say is, that I have put five times more labour into it than I ever anticipated, and am unable to give more". His mood comes out well in the sentence that follows immediately: "I may also remind my critics that I am not paid for my work, that I have no official position to make me responsible to any one, and that all my scientific work is a free gift to my countrymen - or rather to the Germans". It is the latter addition - "or rather to the Germans" - that lays bare where the main reason lies for Sweet's exasperation. Let me quote a longer passage from the Preface; the passage which follows Sweet's account of how slowly his work had progressed:

"Meanwhile, my interest in the work had been flagging more and more. When I first began it, I had some hopes of myself being able to found an independent school of English philology in this country. But as time went on it became too evident that the historical study of English was being rapidly annexed by the Germans, and that English editors would have to abandon all hopes of working up their materials themselves, and resign themselves to the more humble role of purveyors to the swarms of young program-mongers turned out every year by the German universities, so thoroughly trained in all the mechanical details of what may be called 'parasite philology', that no English dilettante can hope to compete with them - except by Germanizing himself and losing all his nationality. All this is of course inevitable - the result of our own neglect, and of the unhealthy over-production of the German universities - but it is not encouraging for those who, like myself, have had the mortification of seeing their favourite investigations forestalled one after another, while they are laboriously collecting their materials. But luckily the fields of linguistic science are wide, and there are regions as yet uninvaded by dissertations and programs, where I yet hope to do work that I need not be ashamed of. Indeed, my only regret now is that I did not abandon the historical study of English five years ago, so as to be able to devote myself entirely to the more important investigations which I have always carried on alongside of my Old English work. I am now resolved that I will take a rest from my long drudgery as soon as I have brought out the second

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edition of my *History of English Sounds*".

At least, you now know to what - or rather, to whom - we all mainly owe Henry Sweet's great works in the field of foreign language teaching. Let me add that I sincerely hope that those among you who now work in this branch of applied linguistics in this country, will not let themselves be put off in their turn by the seemingly overwhelming amount of literature coming to them from the continent, in particular West Germany. For, we all know, in contrast to Sweet, that for us there is no other better branch of linguistics for which the study of applied linguistics can be abandoned.

Note

This is a partly revised version of the paper read at the 20th Annual BAAL Meeting, Nottingham, 13 September 1987. I owe a great debt of gratitude to Bert Weltens of the Institute of Applied Linguistics, Nijmegen, for his help in editing the text.

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